

Com. of Education  
Amherst  
July 9<sup>th</sup> 1920

Dear Sir

I have at last received an interesting & well written report on the employment of some P.N.E.U. methods in some Bradford schools, the gist of which appears to be that these have tried P.N.E.U. methods & found them wanting. I hardly know what to say in reply, the attitude of mind, one which I thought enlightened teachers had left behind, surprises me so much. By the same post I received a letter from which the ~~following~~ <sup>accompanying</sup> is a cutting, but it is useless to forward it, because I think all of these teachers have expressed <sup>the same</sup> wholehearted enthusiasm for the method & have worked it with singular success; indeed I shall always be grateful to Yorkshire schools for their splendid ~~work~~ pioneer work in what seems to me the most vital & promising 'reconstruction' work which has yet presented itself. Nor do these teachers now show ~~that seems to be~~ reason for their change of front. They do not deny that their boys & girls make surprising & delightful progress, that their schools practically sweep the Board in competing for places in the Secondary schools, that there is good promise of sound sense & intelligent living in the future. But they say,--(a) That the method is insuitable for big classes. One Hundred & forty one schools are now working under this method, large schools under many teachers, small schools with all the standards under one or two teachers. The scheme seems

to work equally well in every case though perhaps the large classes have the best of it. For, though we do not allow emulation to take the place of a love of knowledge, it does not naturally in a large class.

The next objection <sup>(b)</sup> seems to me more valid, - that there is too big a gap between the work of Form IA & that of Form IIB. The difficulty I think arises from the fact that in Secondary Schools & home-schoolrooms children spend two years in Form IA, but it seems a necessity in Elementary schools that every child should take a remove once a year. Would it be possible to take the second year as Form IA Upper? There would be no difficulty in the syllabus which is always progressive. A second year in IA should <sup>in</sup> with these schools as <sup>in</sup> with others give the children full power to grapple with IIB.

I should like to say how amazingly advanced I find the children in the lower forms of Elementary schools.

<sup>(c)</sup> Again, the suggestion of an anthology is very good & nothing could be better than the "Oxford Book of Verse" but in such a case of course teachers use books of their own choice. <sup>they wouldn't</sup>

<sup>(d)</sup> <sup>figures in the syllabus</sup> Geography is indeed a vexed <sup>question</sup> subject. Our conditions require a single reading, followed by a narration, of the whole or part, written or spoken, together with such map work. I have not come across any book that meets these conditions & certainly the works suggested do not do so. There are books of travel, no doubt, but these do not lend themselves to a comprehensive view of Geography. I should be very glad to forego the "Amble-side Geography Books", but the children do get a good knowledge of the principles of Geography & a warm pleasant acquaintance with the regions of the world.

No doubt the teacher must always supplement books<sup>used</sup> in the teaching of Geography<sup>to</sup>, especially just now while frontiers are changing.

As to "Natural History or Science", there is probably no doubt that books lead more often to observation than observation & experiment lead to the use of books; at any rate that is the case with P.M.T.U. children who are generally keen observers & well-informed naturalists. I think science teaching in England has suffered greatly from the rejection of books, ~~for~~ the use of mere text-books. As for the notion that we can conceive only

that which we have seen, it is probable that people who have not seen ~~one~~ have a very good notion of a desert or a pyramid.

May I say that I think it is a mistake even to use illustrations freely in a Geography book. Imagination goes the better for not having a crutch<sup>ch</sup>. As for "The Sciences", we had waited for years for just such a book when it appeared, & now we find it invaluable, because the author goes on the sound principle

that any child can understand any scientific principle or law (as far as any of us can) <sup>do so</sup> but the ~~det~~ details <sup>intended in it</sup> of application ~~weary them~~ weary him. I do not know what is meant by a too

rigid adherence to books, but evidently we escape the penalties indicated for our "everyday experience" ~~which~~ reveals a delightful expansion<sup>of</sup> originality & imaginative power. The literature taken in class should precisely not reflect such aspects of life as a child is able to understand. We must cease to think



of a child as <sup>an</sup> archangel sight of a black beetle. A 'young mind' requires no preparation for the atmosphere of a science book. <sup>beyond that. No book itself affords.</sup> Of course any sensible teacher will say a word about "Blow, blow, thou winter wind", & what is of more value will ~~look~~ <sup>look</sup> his own delight.

"But I am afraid I am entirely at sea as to" this last paragraph of the Report. Generations have grown up believing that the teacher is the medium of all knowledge & that the child is there to be poured into like a bucket. The P.N.E.U. exists to reveal the greatness <sup>of a child</sup> of an child, that he is more, not less, capable than we are of every endeavour of mind. I say every endeavour, but I am not quite sure about Mathematics or music; perhaps these are individual & not general gifts. <sup>after some</sup> For the rest, with the experience of many thousands of children, I find that they starve on the meagre supply of ideas which even the most gifted & cultured teacher can offer & that they are shamefully & wickedly defrauded of their ~~inherited~~ inheritance when they are not allowed books, the best books, & plenty of books. A curious instance of the capacity of the 'young mind' came across me a while ago. A group of girls in Form V were reading Browning's "The Death in the Desert". They were called upon unexpectedly to read aloud from the poem beginning where ~~the~~ they had last left off. They read aloud <sup>some</sup> forty lines, a very argumentative passage, <sup>clearly their brother</sup> immediately without pausing they gave in turns a fluent & copious paraphrase of the passage, conveying both its sense & feeling.

I could not have done it so did not feel superior to the "young  
mind."

I thought the Bradford teachers were in full agreement with me as to the greatness of human nature as exhibited in a child; perhaps they are so still but it is difficult to get away from the weary 'chalk & talk' <sup>this is made to stand for</sup> ~~lesson of education~~, though we are all aware of its futility.

I am

Very yours

Charles M. Mason

A. Coffin, Esq.



The Parents' Review.

LONDON OFFICE:  
26, VICTORIA STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.

The House of Education,  
Ambleside.

31.1.1907

Dear Mr. Johnson

Your invitation to what should be a very important meeting reaches me before I have been able to reply to a letter which interested me greatly.

I gladly send at your request four copies of Ourselves for your library. I am kindly asking you to make suggestions as to your admirable syllabus for Secondary Schools. It seems to me that the same sort of teaching should be given to our girls that you propose, what I may call, a liberal moral education.

I think there is danger in putting excessive weight upon any one, or two, or three, moral qualities such



as patriotism, temperance, Rurily. People learn to think that one or two good qualities are the whole of virtue.

But doesn't rather omit the <sup>ethics</sup> ~~morals~~ of the mind & ,  
 Certain intellectual duties & powers, the use & ordering  
 of the reason, of the desire, of the aesthetic sense, ~~and~~  
 duty with duties concerning our opinions etc?

Also, it seems to me, that there is some want of relation  
 in the syllabus; I don't mean so much the relation  
 of the moral qualities to each other as to the properties,  
 powers & inclinations of the person who should manifest  
 them; the 'I can' becomes because 'I am' point of view.

I wonder whether it would be well to found <sup>the</sup> moral teaching  
 on a sort of fixed plan of human  
 nature? We should be able to classify our teaching

Better as, for example, into morals of the body,  
 the mind & the heart <sup>of the conscience & the will</sup>

These are convenient divisions, <sup>(if not quite sufficiently accurate)</sup>  
 easily recognised by

Children ~~that~~ an encouraged to be good by knowing  
 how that provision for goodness exists in themselves.



The House of Education,  
Ambleside.

16 June 302

The Parents' Review.

LONDON OFFICE:  
20, VICTORIA STREET,  
LONDON, W.C.

I suppose the question of the sanctions of what  
we call duty must not be pressed but most  
teachers will, I imagine, base their instructions  
upon such sanctions. I am asking the publisher to send a  
batch of the accompanying syllabus for distribution at  
the meeting if you think well.

I am sorry that I am unable to attend  
meetings otherwise I should make an effort to be  
present on Tuesday next.

With all fond wishes,  
~~Yours~~ I am, very truly yours.



August  
1917

27plome302

To the Editor of "The Journal of Education & School World"

Sir

Thank you for <sup>the</sup> notice in your issue  
for August of an article <sup>entitled "Liberal Education in</sup>  
<sup>Secondary Schools"</sup> in The Parents' Review.

In July last. Sympathy with reservations  
would have been <sup>my own</sup> attitude  
towards <sup>the</sup> ~~such~~ claims <sup>made in that article</sup> for <sup>few</sup> years ago,

for I did not fully perceive that a  
verse acting in general, perhaps universal,  
principles until elementary schools  
took up the work & did 'incredible' things.

I am grateful for your sympathy  
with my plea for a course of wide &  
varied reading & believe that you too would  
deprecate desultory reading as of little  
educational value. "But" you add, "the necessary  
preliminary to such a course" (i.e. of wide  
& varied reading) is, we think the formation  
of the habit of intensive & concentrated  
attention which by no means comes naturally  
to the great majority of children, never adults."



inviting frank discussion of the methods  
by themselves. Their efforts, <sup>in schools</sup> seen by the children.  
Admirable letters, pro and con, resulted.

These, accompanied by his own comments,  
is ~~presented~~ <sup>presented</sup> as a report to his Committee.

This report sets forth the principles on which  
we work, as patterned by the teachers themselves,  
far more fully than I can venture to do  
in a letter. One point will strike the reader,

that this work, even as modified for elementary  
schools, requires able intelligent teachers  
qualified for a higher role than <sup>the</sup> "possible  
feeding" to common in our schools. In

the hands of the highly qualified teachers of Vocational  
Secondary Schools it should <sup>bring about</sup> ~~work~~ a revolution,  
~~in educational methods~~ <sup>no doubt,</sup> ~~no doubt,~~

For the last resort, <sup>no doubt,</sup> everything depends on  
the teacher.

The article ~~of your report~~ <sup>your report</sup> enough to notice  
in the ~~Journal of Education~~ <sup>Journal of Education</sup> which  
is being issued as a pamphlet, and any head  
of schools seriously interested in the subject <sup>are</sup> will  
apply for this pamphlet to the Secretary - Office

\* Also: "Report" - RNRH Office - 26 Victoria Street. (see)



Thanking you, Sir, for allowing me to  
call the attention of your readers  
to a discovery in a region too little explored  
I am, Sir,  
Charles W. Mason

House of Education  
Amherst, Mass.

Again, exception is taken to the fact that, "up  
to the present" he has made the choice of books suitable  
for each age to secure the results he claims;  
that is an obvious objection & a respectable  
fact; but a moment's consideration will  
satisfy <sup>the</sup> reader that a homogeneous  
scheme of education must needs  
proceed from a single mind; even  
were the matter worked by a committee  
one member would necessarily act &  
the rest be more or less lay figures.  
The patchwork character of the education  
commonly <sup>given</sup> - a plan picked up here, an idea  
there. ~~As~~ a good text book elsewhere, is one  
cause of the inability of much of our work.

Schools which do the work of the lower forms (1a 1b 1c 1d 1e) will send up a set of papers for each division. (Each school do not often take the work of forms V & VI).

In the event of a form, say, III being divided & worked under two or more teachers, one teacher might send papers to the Eastern Examination, the other to that at Exeter.

7) Matrix:

### Pamphlets

Prospectus

Programmes

Questions

Rules & Exam Regulation

" Memoranda